

The Palestinians as an "Invented People"

A Comment

[Rich Siegel](#)

The name "Palestine" has been around for a long time. "Peleset", transliterated from Egyptian hieroglyphics as "P-I-s-t", is found in numerous Egyptian documents referring to a neighboring people or land starting from around 1150 BC. The "Philistine" States existed concurrently with the ancient Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, making up the coastal plain below Jaffa and south to Gaza. In the 5th Century BC Herodotus wrote of a "district of Syria, called Palestine". About a century later, Aristotle described the Dead Sea in *Meteorology* and located it in Palestine:

"Again if, as is fabled, there is a lake in Palestine, such that if you bind a man or beast and throw it in it floats and does not sink, this would bear out what we have said. They say that this lake is so bitter and salty that no fish live in it and that if you soak clothes in it and shake them it cleans them."

This writer has had the misfortune of frequently engaging in debates with Zionists (a bad habit I need to kick!) who often tend to seize on small ideas. "When did the Palestinians ever have their own country?" In order to win such an argument one would have to reduce oneself to their terms, and produce a map that shows a country and borders: "Palestinian Kingdom, 1587- 1702", and then let them present their map of ancient Israel and Judea, and then get into a wrestling match the winner of which would claim the territory for their own. Or perhaps the issue would be better settled the way the New York colony won Staten Island from New Jersey: with a boat race. If the goal is exclusivity, as it always has been with Zionism, then the only criterion in achieving it is winning, whether a war or a race.

There was no 17th century Palestinian Kingdom, or 18th or 19th. There were, prior to Allied victory in World War One and the League of Nations "mandates" which granted European powers control of the region, various provinces in a larger Ottoman empire, ruled from Istanbul (previously known as Constantinople, and before that, Byzantium), much as there are today various American states governed from Washington. Objectors will cry "Foul!", as Americans are governed by Americans in Washington, whereas Arabs were governed by Turks, a different ethnic group with a different language. Fine. So I modify my comparison to the Spanish speaking Puerto Ricans governed from Washington, or the French speaking Quebecois governed from Ottawa. Neither the Puerto Ricans nor the French Canadians are being ethnically cleansed.



"A Coffee-house in Palestine." Scanned from a period stereoscope card. Printed by Keystone View Company, Manufacturers and Publishers, Meadville Pennsylvania & St. Louis Missouri. Copyright 1900 by B. L. Singley.

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Prior to Zionism, there was no need for the Arabs of Palestine to focus on Palestinian identity. They were citizens of the Ottoman Empire. When, during the mandate years the British made contradictory promises to the Zionists and the Arabs, and the Arabs expected, and had the right to expect, eventual self-rule, it was certainly not a foregone conclusion that there was going to be an independent Palestine. Palestinians might well have been a part of a larger South Syria, or of a Greater Syria, and happily so. They certainly would not have been ethnically cleansed under those circumstances. The Arabs of Palestine have always had their own distinct Arabic dialect, and various other cultural attributes that set them apart from other regional Arab cultures, but that was never particularly relevant. Many various

subcultures existed within the Ottoman Empire, and continued to exist within British and French mandates.

Interestingly, during the years of the *Yishuv*, the pre-Israeli-statehood Zionist community in Palestine, Jewish-Zionist settlers called themselves “Palestinians”. In this way, the Zionists ironically affirmed the thing that many of them wish now to deny: Palestinian identity. In 1948, amid the massacres and military forced mass expulsions of the “nakba” (Arabic for catastrophe, the name commonly given to the events of 1948), when the state of “Israel” was declared, all of the Jews who had been calling themselves Palestinians became “Israelis”, and when the dust cleared, the Arabs who remained within the green line became “Arab Israelis”, like it or not. (It was not known until the state of “Israel” was declared, what it was to be named. “Zion” was considered as a possibility, but rejected, as the result would have necessitated referring to “Arab Israelis”, the Arab citizens of Israel, as “Arab Zionists”.)

The designation “Palestinian” was more actively embraced beginning in 1964, with the forming of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization), this *out of necessity*, because a people who had been ethnically cleansed, who were in a state of shock and humiliation, and who were desperate to recover and regain what was rightfully theirs, found it useful to rally around symbols representing themselves: A name and a flag are two of the basics.

Golda Meir famously said in 1969, during her tenure as Israeli prime minister;

“There were no such thing as Palestinians. When was there an independent Palestinian people with a Palestinian state? It was either southern Syria before the First World War, and then it was a Palestine including Jordan. It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist.”

Golda is actually right on this point and that point. I would not have been able to show her a map that says “Kingdom of Palestine” or “Grand Duchy of Palestine” or any of dozens of designations that might have satisfied her. But this I can say for sure: There were human beings on that land, and they had been there all their lives, and their families for many generations before them down through the centuries. And many of them were actually descended from ancient Jews who later converted to Christianity and Islam, while our ancestors, Golda’s and mine- the Ashkenazi Jews, were converting to Judaism in the Khazar Kingdom on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Golda actually knew when making this statement, the information which has become available to the general public in the decades since: We Jews *did* come and throw them out and take their country away from them. It’s been thoroughly documented. It wasn’t when she made this statement in 1969. She was able to get away with it then. But since then an entire generation of Jewish-Israeli scholars, (and many others, but we Jews need to hear it from Jews first!) has carefully documented the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and presented the history that she personally knew, but actively hid and denied. She and her colleagues concealed the truth from Jewish supporters of Israel all over the world including my family, who taught me lies quite innocently, because they didn’t know any better.

In 1984 a book written by Joan Peters, entitled *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine*, was released to the world. The book claimed that the Palestinians were not resident in Palestine long-term, but were recent arrivals, having come to take advantage of economic

opportunities in Palestine which were largely the result of Zionist Jewish settlement. What a perfect way for us Zionist Jews to massage ourselves (I was one at the time!) and drive a wedge between ourselves and the growing awareness about Palestine in the world around us! So it really *was* a “land without people for a people without a land”! Those Arabs were all immigrants! And how ungrateful that they hate us after all the opportunity we gave them! A wave of related claims surfaced among the Zionist community. An essay by Mark Twain describing his touring of a sparsely populated 19th century Palestine, was offered up into the mix of “Palestinian-denier” evidence. Twain, whose writing was full of humorous and ironic opposition to human bullshit, was no doubt rolling in his grave over this. And claims were often heard that prominent Palestinians, from Edward Said to Yassir Arafat, were “not really Palestinian”.

Enter another book, in 2003, *The Case for Israel* by Alan Dershowitz. In case 19 intervening years had given anyone a memory lapse since the publication of Peters's book, Dershowitz borrowed heavily from same, giving the same statistics and making the same conclusions.

Enter yet another book, but this one very different: In *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History*, published in 2005, Norman G. Finkelstein exposed Peters's statistics as fraudulent, and with that revelation both her argument and that of Dershowitz, collapsed. However, the damage is done among those who wish to ignore Finkelstein, and there are many! “Isn’t he a holocaust denier?”, I’ve been asked. I respond: “No. His parents were holocaust survivors.” Zionists have long used a familiar tactic against those who challenge their propaganda: Defamation. And so the lies persist. This writer *still* has people putting *From Time Immemorial* in his face to prove their argument. They refuse to be embarrassed.

At the time of this writing (January 2012), the American public is being treated to an entertainment we get every four years: the run up to our presidential election. As the Democratic candidate will obviously be the incumbent, we are witnessing the Republican candidates claw at each other in their striving to win support for the Republican nomination. Enter a billionaire Jewish American Zionist named Sheldon Adelson, casino magnate and the 8th wealthiest American alive, who along with his wife has donated \$10 million to candidate Newt Gingrich. Adelson, whose holdings include the Israeli newspaper *Israel HaYom (Israel Today)* made some interesting statements while in Israel at an Israel Media Watch event in 2010:

“I am not Israeli. The uniform that I wore in the military, unfortunately, was not an Israeli uniform. It was an American uniform, although my wife was in the IDF and one of my daughters was in the IDF ... our two little boys, one of whom will be bar mitzvahed tomorrow, hopefully he’ll come back– his hobby is shooting – and he’ll come back and be a sniper for the IDF.”

And:

“All we (the Adelson family) care about is being good Zionists, being good citizens of Israel, because even though I am not Israeli born, Israel is in my heart.

Does it sound like this guy has “divided loyalties?” Maybe like the Jewish neocons in the Bush administration who got us to fight a proxy war for Israel in Iraq? No- you can’t say that! It would be “anti-Semitic”!

So is it any wonder that Newt Gingrich has made the utterly incorrect and profoundly idiotic statement that he has made about the Palestinians being an “invented” people? It has nothing to do with any education on the subject of the history, or any awareness of the current situation. It’s simply a question of wanting to win, and of reiterating nonsense he has heard in conversations with a very rich and generous supporter, nonsense which jives with the general impressions that Americans get from our Zionist-controlled media, and that no doubt circulate in Gingrich’s Republican circles. Does anyone think Gingrich has read Finkelstein? I doubt it! And if he did, would he turn down \$10 million in favor of truth and justice?

The people native to the land of Palestine were not “invented”. It is indeed unfortunate that someone who is supposedly educated, and who has achieved position in life where he is poised to potentially become the next president of the United States, is putting forth such foolishness.

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